

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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This section identifies more specifically the strengths and challenges of the Upper Westside. The issues and opportunities shown in Tables 4.1 through 4.6 are based both on an analysis of current conditions and trends in the study area, as well as stakeholder feedback. Together they guide the concepts, strategies, and action steps that follow.

TABLE 4.1 – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

COMMUNITY CHARACTER	
ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The area has a history as an industrial “no man’s land” that lacks identity and is uninviting ▪ The area has an authentic sense of community and inclusiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen community capacity and increase dialogue among diverse interests ▪ Embrace the growing identity as a grass root center for visual and performing arts and creative services ▪ Embrace the area’s proximity to high tech, educational and research activities ▪ Re-use the existing industrial stock to create funky, flexible, affordable living and working spaces ▪ Revive the history of the area as a vibrant traditional community that combines jobs, housing and retail ▪ Add community oriented amenities, such as parks and centers

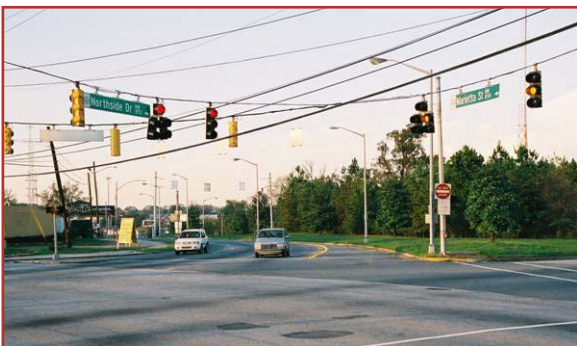


OLDER INDUSTRIAL FABRIC CREATES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A UNIQUE CHARACTER FOR THE UPPER WESTSIDE

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TABLE 4.2 – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

URBAN DESIGN	
ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the large land uses in the area turn away from the public realm and fail to embrace surrounding smaller scale uses Rail corridors, arterials and current block patterns all diminish sense of place and create an incoherent and disorienting urban pattern Super blocks are an obstacle to redevelopment and pedestrian oriented activity Commercial activity tends to string along corridors The area focuses activity at King Plow, the Howell Mill/Marietta intersection, and the Bankhead MARTA Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce physically distinct sections of the community to promote diversity Strengthen the design framework of the study area by defining corridors, common spaces, and nodes of activity Improve sense of place and orientation by adding wayfinding elements, whether its signs, public art, gateways or signature architecture Enhance the public realm with streetscaping, urban plazas and other gathering areas Large institutional users can enhance the public realm with plazas and street-oriented design elements Support Georgia Tech's Master Plan efforts to create an urban boulevard along Marietta Street Capitalize on the unique geometry of key intersections to create orientating, signature gateways Promote the desired character identified by stakeholders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptive re-use that maintains existing industrial character Pedestrian-friendly gathering places and plazas Low to mid rise buildings Contemporary, post-industrial look for new development Buildings up to the street Use of traditional street car for transit connectivity



UNUSUAL INTERSECTIONS AND
ROADWAY ALIGNMENTS INCREASE
THE SENSE OF DISORIENTATION

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TABLE 4.3 – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

LAND USE	
ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The area suffers from incompatibilities with some industrial users, particularly junkyards ▪ Other nuisance conditions in the area include: noise, litter, vacant lots and neglected properties ▪ Residential areas have been either eroded or fully encroached upon by large institutional or industrial activities ▪ The already mixed use nature of the area increases the community's receptivity to flexible, innovative development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote workforce and lifecycle housing through conversions of existing building stock or infill on available parcels ▪ Intensify uses along corridors, such as Hollowell Parkway and Marietta Street ▪ Promote a land use scheme that achieves better compatibility between residential and non-residential and industrial and non-industrial users, but also maintains the flexibility of current mixed use trends ▪ Protect or re-establish the residential fabric of Blandtown, Howell Station and English Avenue ▪ Promote friendly neighborhood retail along Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway and Marietta Street



POORLY MAINTAINED PROPERTIES CONTRIBUTE TO A SENSE OF BLIGHT

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TABLE 4.4 – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

OPEN SPACE	
ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The area lacks green space and gathering areas ▪ The area lacks active recreational facilities ▪ The area has vacant/underused publicly owned sites ▪ Current parks, such as Maddox Park and Knight Park, are neglected or underused ▪ Two proposals, the Proctor Creek Park and Beltline, would bring open space to the study area ▪ Underused/abandoned rail lines create natural open space corridors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seize the opportunity to create rare green space in an urban context ▪ Promote re-use of abandoned rail corridors for linear open spaces, particularly the Beltline ▪ Promote additional greenway links that combine connectivity and recreational features ▪ Establish connections to Maddox Park and the Proctor Creek Park ▪ Identify re-use of public sites, such as the English Avenue School or Atlanta Waterworks, for open space access ▪ Renovate Knight Park, including its Community Center ▪ Establish a network of smaller, dispersed pocket parks and urban plazas ▪ Explore the use of land associated with large, private institutional users for public access ▪ Create a signature park to function as an orientation feature and main gathering space for the community ▪ Capitalize on the unique historical features of the area



THE ATLANTA WATER WORKS PROPERTY MAY BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATING ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

TABLE 4.5 – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

TRANSPORTATION	
ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The area suffers from poor internal connections, especially weak east-west links ▪ Rail lines pass through the area, severing connectivity ▪ Some unusually configured intersections create safety hazards (Northside Drive, Marietta/Brady, Northside/Marietta) ▪ The study area lacks pedestrian features, such as sidewalks and well marked crossings ▪ Georgia Tech plans to eliminate Tech Parkway ▪ Multiple transportation options and studies affect the area, including the C Loop and Beltline, the Northwest Connectivity Study and Northside Drive Corridor Study ▪ Trend toward denser, mixed use land patterns supports alternative transportation options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the safety and function of intersections ▪ Strengthen east-west links ▪ Enhance external connectivity to other activity centers such as Atlantic Station, Midtown, the Bolton Road Area and the JSA McGill Area ▪ Promote C Loop and Beltline opportunities that complement existing land uses in the study area ▪ Coordinate the intensification of activity at key intersections and along corridors with alternative transportation options ▪ Improve walkability and bikability with sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and greenway links ▪ Refine the street network to connect key parts of the study area ▪ Create safe, grade-separated rail crossings ▪ Add infrastructure to support higher levels of MARTA bus use



MANY IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED TO THE PEDESTRIAN REALM, SUCH AS LIGHTING, STREET TREES, AND STREET FURNITURE.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

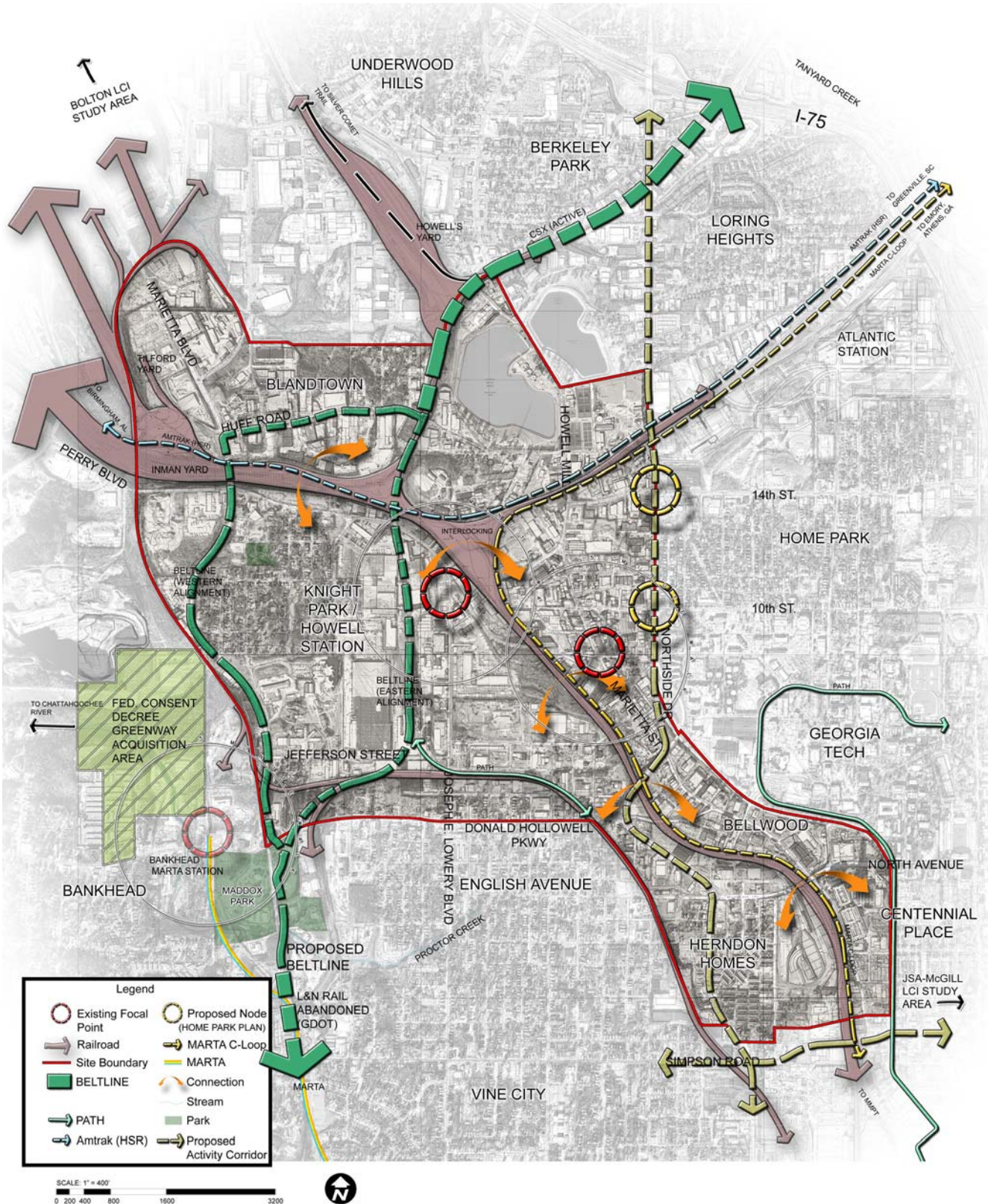
TABLE 4.6 – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

MARKET	
ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parts of the study area have many absentee landlords and abandoned properties Active industrial users contribute to the economic vitality of the study area The area has an estimated 10 year demand of 6,800 dwelling units and 432,000 square feet of retail The area enjoys proximity to jobs, retail, entertainment and major employment centers The area has a strong and stabilizing institutional presence The area has an emerging market for destination shopping, such as interior design, art and furniture Land values in some of the hottest sections of the study area are increasing rapidly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote compatible residential infill development to stabilize eroding neighborhood fabric in areas such as English Avenue and Blandtown Promote flexible and affordable living and working spaces Find strategies to convert very large formerly industrial buildings into smaller, flexible spaces Identify catalyst redevelopment sites to spark additional growth Promote regulatory flexibility to maintain the hip, mixed use character that is the brand of the area Work to minimize the displacement of long-time residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations that contribute to the inclusiveness of the area Integrate industry to maintain a healthy economic base for the area and the city Capitalize on the growing market identity of the area for smaller, niche offices, specialized retail, and the arts Market the area as a high tech “hot spot” due to its proximity to Georgia Tech Promote neighborhood serving retail opportunities



FLEXIBLE LIVING AND WORKING SPACES ARE A KEY PART OF THE MARKET STRATEGY FOR THE UPPER WESTSIDE

FIGURE 13 – ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Though not within the study area, the adjacency of two major City and regional facilities create strong opportunities for connections to the Upper Westside. Maddox Park, a 51-acre park with picnic pavilions, swimming pool, and athletic facilities lies next to the southwest corner of the study area (see Figure 13). The Bankhead MARTA Station is approximately one-third of a mile west of the study area along Donald L. Hollowell Parkway. The Donald L. Hollowell Parkway Redevelopment Plan, adopted in November 2003, studied the Bankhead MARTA Station. The City of Atlanta is applying for an Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative grant to identify additional land use, design, transportation, and development concepts for the Bankhead MARTA area, including Maddox Park.

REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Figure 14 shows redevelopment opportunities within the study area. Redevelopment opportunities are defined as those properties having one or more of the following characteristics:

- ☐ The site is vacant, unused, or currently for sale or lease
- ☐ The site has a building that is significantly dilapidated or contains a use that is incompatible relative to surroundings (i.e. junkyards in proximity to residential)
- ☐ The site is currently underused relative to the high visibility and access of its physical surroundings (i.e. a marginal small scale personal service store on a prominent intersection of a well traveled corridor)
- ☐ The site contains a use that is known to be in transition within the short term to another use

In the southeastern leg of the study area, the most significant redevelopment opportunities include the parcels adjacent to Herndon Homes and land around Antioch Baptist Church that has been assembled by the Bethursday Development Corporation for neighborhood renewal purposes. The area of North Avenue west of Northside Drive also includes a number of underused and/or vacant industrial and warehouse buildings.



A VACANT PROPERTY REPRESENTS A REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE AREA

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway currently suffers from physical blight and disinvestment. As a result, much of the activity along the corridor takes the form of marginal, strip commercial uses that fail to distinguish nodes of activity or to connect to surrounding neighborhoods.

The area between Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway and Jefferson Street is perhaps the most physically distressed pocket within the study area. Blocks along Wheeler Street and Bedford Street contain a mix of industrial, junkyard, and warehousing activity. While some of the uses, such as Georgia Power and Archer Daniels Midland, remain viable and are likely to continue indefinitely, many of the uses are marginal and subject to transition as the area redevelops. In particular, the Better Brands headquarters at 755 Jefferson Street is slated for closure after acquisition by another distributor.

The western portion of the study area includes new infill development opportunities in the Howell Station and Knight Park neighborhood and in the currently underused and narrow strip of industrial land west of Marietta Boulevard.

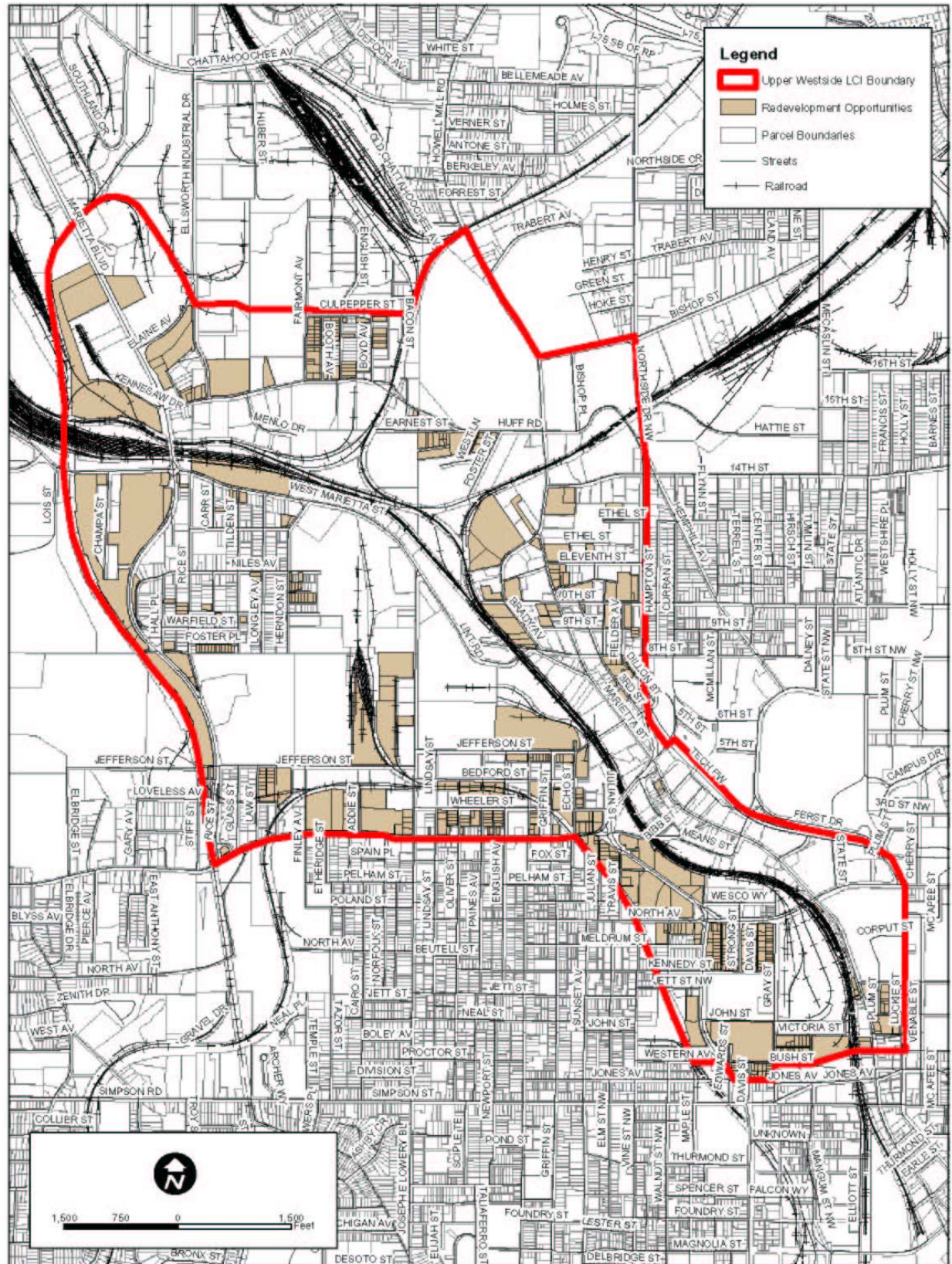
The northern quadrant of the Upper Westside includes numerous redevelopment opportunities along Huff Road, particularly in the Blandtown neighborhood, which has lost much of its residential fabric to vacant lots and encroaching industrial activity. The historic neighborhood now has less than a dozen remaining households.

The western edge of the study area features strong redevelopment opportunities, particularly between Northside Drive and Brady Avenue.



THIS PROPERTY SHOWS FEW SIGNS OF ACTIVE USE OR SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT; A POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY.

FIGURE 14 – REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Recognizing the need for a revitalization catalyst, particularly in the southern portion of the study area, the City of Atlanta has targeted parts of the Upper Westside as an economic development priority. As shown in Figure 15, a portion of the City of Atlanta's Westside Renewal Cluster falls inside or adjacent to the study area, including: the English Avenue neighborhood; the area around Herndon Homes, Northyards Business Park and Antioch Church; and a currently industrial pocket along Marietta Boulevard in the northwest.

The Renewal Community designation qualifies areas for a series of tax incentives designed to reverse economic disinvestment by stimulating neighborhood revitalization, job expansion, and affordable housing development. Available incentives include: wage credits, work opportunity credits and welfare to work credits; tax deductions, including those for environmental cleanup costs, and capital gains exclusions.

A portion of the study area is also within the Westside Redevelopment Plan and Tax Allocation Bond District (see Figure 16). Within the district, increases in property tax revenues, resulting primarily from new investment, are allocated to pay infrastructure or certain private development costs within the area. The Neighborhood Portion of the Westside TAD includes the Vine City and English Avenue neighborhoods.

TAD funding is available to developments that support linkages between the CBD, Georgia Tech, Atlanta University and adjoining neighborhoods, enhanced transit access, community environment initiatives, such as parks and open space, and a variety of incentives for infrastructure and other improvements.

The New Century Economic Development Plan for the City of Atlanta also identifies the Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway corridor as one of six priority development areas.



RAILROAD BRIDGE IS PART OF AN UNUSED RAIL CORRIDOR THAT COULD BE CONVERTED TO A GREENWAY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS

FIGURE I5 – RENEWAL COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

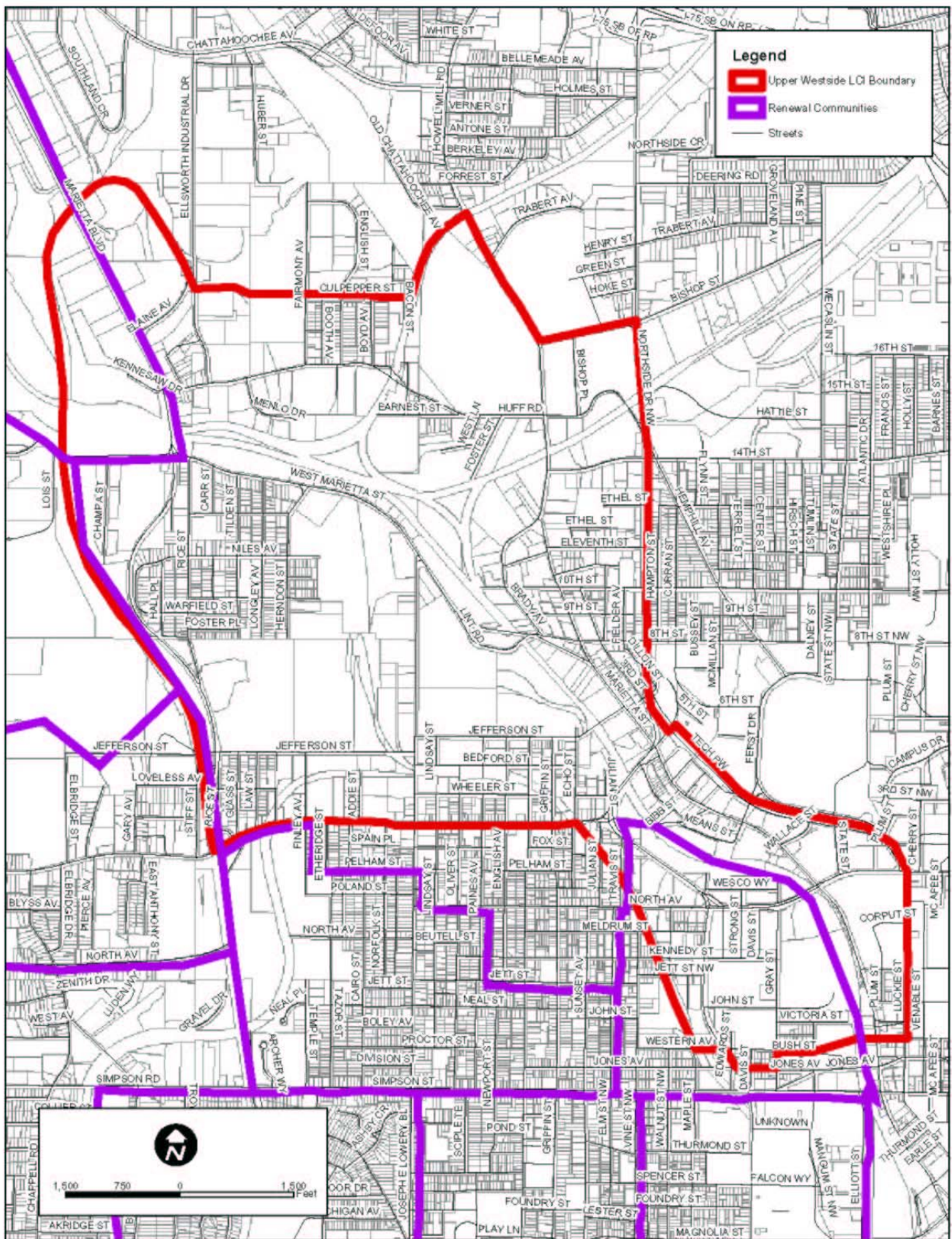
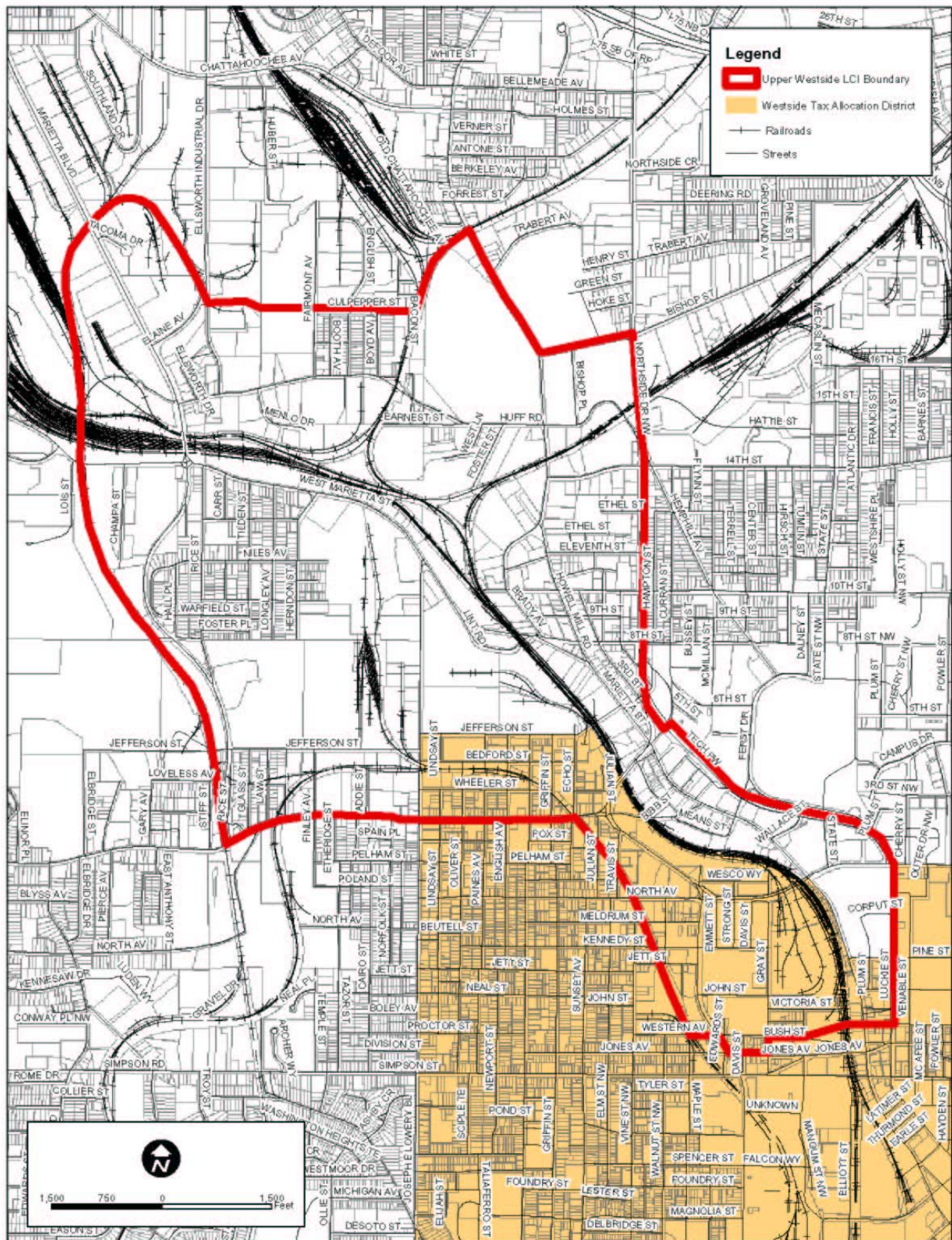


FIGURE 16 – WESTSIDE TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

OVERVIEW OF MARKET DEMAND

According to market analysis, which is summarized in Table 5 and 6, the Upper Westside can absorb almost 580,000 square feet of retail in the next ten years, primarily in the specialty retail category. Housing demand will be very robust with the ability to support some 6,800 units, particularly in higher density, mixed use developments.

TABLE 5 – SUMMARY OF RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL

	INTOWN MARKET CAPTURE	REGIONAL MARKET CAPTURE	TOTAL SQUARE FEET
YEARS 2004-2009	65,583	175,058	240,641
YEARS 2009-2014	83,723	255,384	339,107
10 YEAR TOTAL	149,306	430,442	579,748

TABLE 6 – SUMMARY OF RESIDENTIAL MARKET POTENTIAL

	RENTAL HOUSING	FOR SALE HOUSING	TOTAL UNITS
10 YEAR TOTAL (2004-2014)	4,307	2,457	6,764



NEW SINGLE FAMILY CONSTRUCTION IN THE HOWELL STATION NEIGHBORHOOD



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL

The study area has the potential of drawing an additional \$17.2 million in shoppers goods sales by 2009 and \$28.0 million by 2014 from Regional Market Area residents. These increases in sales translate into 91,410 square feet of supportable retail space by 2009 and an additional 149,123 square feet by 2014. In 2009, 28 percent of the estimated demand for shoppers goods space will result from expenditures by Intown Market Area residents, dropping to 22 percent by 2014 as the study area draws more customers from beyond a six-minute drive. Examples of shoppers goods that would appeal to the key target markets include: home furnishings and accessories, trendy apparel, architectural antiques, gardening supplies, card/stationery/gifts, pet supplies and art galleries.

In addition to shoppers goods, the study area will see additional retail development for convenience goods, restaurants, entertainment, and personal services. Retail growth in both the restaurant and entertainment retail segments will be significant. The total new supportable retail space driven by Intown Market Area over the next 10 years will be approximately 150,000 square feet and the total new supportable space driven by the Regional Market Area over the next 10 years will be approximately 430,000 square feet.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Demand for higher density, mixed use housing is estimated at 9,448 housing units over the next ten years in the Intown Market Area. An estimated 12,669 annual households in the Intown Market Area are potential renters at market rate projects set in a mixed-use setting. (See **Appendix C – Market Analysis** for detailed analysis.)

While the conclusion that there is unmet potential demand for housing in the Upper Westside is difficult to quantify directly, there are several indications of an unmet demand:

- ☐ Strong intown/close-in residential market, fueled by the desire to reduce commuting time.
- ☐ Accessible to nearby shopping, jobs and recreation, further heightened with the completion of the 17th Street Bridge.
- ☐ Growing popularity of communities that connect residents to community, culture and a variety of activities.
- ☐ Strong absorption rates at nearby for-sale developments, especially those with units priced below \$250,000, and at recently developed rental communities in the study area.
- ☐ Although still considered a “good deal” relative to other intown neighborhoods, land/housing prices are rapidly increasing.
- ☐ Potential appeal to multiple target markets: young professionals, childless couples, empty nesters, students/parents, etc.
- ☐ Study area’s growing identity as a cultural/arts center separates it from other intown projects and fuels excitement.
- ☐ The study area’s location in a “good” school district as well as good access to nearby private schools, including the Howard School which is moving its campus to the study area in 2005.